

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Jim Connaughton.

MR. CONNAUGHTON: All I can say is you have to love the mayors. And I want to thank Senator Crapo for his contribution today in adding to the historical foundation for this conference in the role of sportsmen in the long tough road of conservation as we carry things forward.

How many of you made it out to the Gateway Arch last night? Let's see the hands. The person who is the superintendent of the park that looks over the Arch is Peggy O'Dell. She also happens to be the person that organized this conference. So the real side of federal/state/city partnership and local involvement. If you would all give Peggy O'Dell a big hand for her efforts. In fact, she's working back stage.

All right. Another show of hands? How many of you learned something new yesterday? Okay. Good. I did. So we did education of my three prongs from yesterday. Well, if yesterday was about learning something new, today is about making something new. So we're going to put all of you to work today.

In the President's Executive Order, he asked me to organize this conference for this purpose: to facilitate the exchange of information and advice relating to cooperative conservation. So today is about how we begin to define out our common themes, our common trends, our moments of opportunity, to take what we learned yesterday and take your shared experiences and figure out the essence of what will ultimately be a long term blueprint for all of us.

Now for the federal part, I loved Mayor Williams' statement. By the way, I'm privileged to serve on the Mayor's Environmental Council and we need to make things happen. We don't convene a conference for the sake of having a conference. So today we're going to have a couple dozen facilitators. We talk about facilitating the exchange of ideas.

Could the facilitators please stand up? Where are they? Please stand up. Or are they working? Guess what? All of the facilitators are back in their rooms ready for all of you. We have volunteer facilitators and I'd like you all to give them a hand right now and we'll honor them later.

But we're at a point in America where it's a profession to be an environmental mediator and facilitator.

That's a remarkable thing. That doesn't exist in other countries and you will have some of the best of the best out here in these rooms here with you today. And their

mission is to collect what you produce. Their mission is to then produce for the vision of all what you have had to say and then that will be for all of us to share as we go forward.

On the federal side of the issue, we want to carry this conversation forward. I just want to announce here today that we are forming a Federal task force, a high level task force, that will operate at the Assistant Secretary level who are the implementers in each of these agencies and working groups that are going to be carrying forward what we discuss here today on the federal side. Now, of course, we need the same kind of interest and activity on the state/local government side and in your collective organizations to find the ways that we can take these themes and these strains of actions that we're going to generate here today and carry them forward.

We are taking the first big step in cooperative conservation for this century here today. So you're going to be a part of that. I'm looking forward to these sessions today but take off the jackets, roll up those sleeves because we're working today. Enjoy yourself.